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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

21 June 1960

INTERNAL O/NE ONLY
DRAFT MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN TURKEY*

NOTE: We are informed that the Planning Board will discuss short-run policy toward Turkey at its meeting on 24 June with NSC consideration scheduled for 30 June. This memorandum is an expansion and updating of an earlier report of a round-table discussion of CIA and USIB agency representatives on 8 June. It is submitted in the belief that a broad view would be of use in the forthcoming policy discussions.

1. The new Turkish regime appears to be firmly in control of the country and there are no significant indications of popular opposition to its rule. The regime has shed the illusions that it could restore civil government almost immediately and hold national elections within three months, and appears to have a more realistic view of the problems it faces. It has settled down to work and is attacking these problems in an energetic, if inexperienced, manner. The provisional government is controlled by the National Unity Committee (NUC) which staged the coup and now acts as the country's "legislature."

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* Discussed with OCI

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2. Any assessment of the outlook for the regime is hampered by our lack of hard evidence on the personalities and the locus of power within the NUC. Indeed, it seems likely that power relationships have in fact not been firmly established. While General Gursel is more than a figurehead, his position appears to be more akin to that of first among equals than to undisputed leader. Relatively little is known of Gursel himself, although he is not noted for intellectual brilliance. He is considered, however, to be a forceful man who had disapproved of Menderes' repressive policies well before the coup. There is evidence that Gursel, though certainly not anti-US, did consider his former superior (the deposed Chief of the General Staff, Erdelhun) as too much under Menderes' thumb and too slavish toward the US.

3. On the whole, we still believe that the regime is sincere in its expressed intention to hold national elections and restore civil government. To do otherwise would run counter to one of the major reasons for staging the coup -- a desire for greater political freedom -- and would invite the strong disapproval of former president Inonu and the Republican People's Party (RPP). There is no evidence that the NUC as such has ambitions for lasting political control on the pattern of

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Nasser's Free Officers, though General Gursel and others of them might doff their uniforms and form a new political movement in a restored civil government.

4. At the same time, the objectives and attitudes of those in power may be subject to modification by the press of circumstances, their own experiences, and the interplay of personalities. The difficulties in relinquishing power, real or fancied, could result in the junta prolonging its control, whether from genuine fear of chaos, an acquired taste for power, or apprehension lest a restoration of civil government result in some settling of scores on the part of those against whom the regime has acted.

5. Despite its apparently firm control of the country there have been a number of indications of a "sense of uneasiness" on the part of the regime. It has reduced Turkey's contingent in Korea from a brigade to a company on the ground that the brigade is needed in Turkey, and has decided to conduct a much wider purge of Menderes' Democrat Party than was originally intended. In addition, there are a number of indications of frictions within the regime. There is fairly strong evidence of a split in the NUC over its future role in Turkish affairs between those who favor

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the return to power of Inonu and the RPP, and those who favor a new and more nation-listic political movement. There are also reports that some senior military officers resent the power and prominence of the relatively junior NUC. In addition, Turkish military attaches abroad have reportedly been ordered to report on the actions of their ambassadors, which does not suggest complete self-confidence on the part of the regime.

6. The importance -- or in some cases even the accuracy -- of such reported differences is difficult to evaluate. It would hardly be surprising if there were policy differences among NUC members, and a certain amount of nervousness and apprehension may be no more than is natural for an inexperienced military regime at this stage. It would appear from the number of reports, however, that more than the inevitable personality and policy disputes is involved and that disputes and maneuvering for position are likely to continue. On the present evidence, however, we do not believe that these disputes will become so serious -- at least during the next few months -- as to imperil the stability of the regime or cause it to abandon its goal of holding national elections and return to civil government.

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7. The outcome of a national election in the near future would depend to a large extent on the role played by the NUC. If it merely oversees the holding of free elections, the RPP probably will emerge victorious and take control of the government. On the other hand, the military apparently want a two-party system and question the ability of the purged Democrat Party to play a major role -- at least during the next few years -- which may lead the regime to sponsor a new political movement. If the regime does this, it will be strongly tempted to assure the party's victory. While we believe that the odds are against the development of a military-sponsored party, these odds will decrease the longer the regime remains in power. In any event, the military are likely to play a more important role in Turkish affairs in the future, if for no other reason than to protect the officers in control of the regime from punishment by a future civilian government.

8. The provisional government has taken a number of steps to improve the government's financial position. It has appointed competent men to the key economic positions, and has begun to prune Turkey's overambitious development program. In addition, it has announced plans to sell bonds to the public to relieve the stringency of its financial position. These actions suggest

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that the regime is less apprehensive about its immediate financial problems than it was shortly after it assumed power. It also appears that the Menderes' government did not leave the treasury quite as empty as the new regime originally claimed. Nevertheless, its financial position does not appear strong and further appeals for additional US aid are likely in the near future.

9. Neither the interim government nor the RPP are likely to alter the main outlines of Turkish foreign policy, although there are indications that both favor the adoption of a more independent stance in foreign affairs. While Inönü and the RPP inaugurated Turkey's policy of cooperation with the West, the RPP has been critical of Menderes for carrying this cooperation too far. In addition, the RPP has always been somewhat inclined toward isolationism, particularly as regards ~~Arab~~ affairs. Although the provisional government has stated it will honor all of Turkey's international commitments, there are indications that the US may lose the preferential status it has had in recent years. Unless the new regime adopts a much more nationalist policy than appears likely, however, the broad framework of Turkish cooperation with the West is likely to continue.